

Russell Potter House
26 John Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-241

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
138-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

RUSSELL POTTER HOUSE

Address: 26 John Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Mason

Present Use: Dwelling

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is a typical example of an early nineteenth
century Providence house.

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
138-

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1810 William Ashton sells for \$500 to Russell Potter, housewright, a certain lot of land bounded: S by John Street 50'; E by Thayer Street 120'; N by Rebecca Williams 50'; W by grantors 120'. - Deed Book 34, page 140, in Providence City Hall.
- 1817 Russell Potter, housewright sells for \$2000 to Harding Stoddard, blacksmith, a certain lot of land bounded: N by A B Hetherington 50'; E by Thayer Street 72'; S by John Street 50'; W by Charles W Tillinghast 72'..with DWELLING HOUSE 38'x31' and a carpenter's Work Shop 24'x16' both thereon standing. - Deed Book 40, page 307, in Providence City Hall.
- 1821 Harding Stoddard, blacksmith sells for \$1725 to James M Blinn the above property. - Deed Book 44, page 298, in Providence City Hall.
- 1824 James Blinn, mariner, lived here. - Providence Directory.
- 1826 Sally Blinn, widow, corner of John and Thayer Streets. - Providence Directory.
- 1830 Sarah Blinn et al, heirs of James Blinn, mariner sell to Peter Linard the highest bidder at public auction the above property for \$1200...Bounded: N by Joshua Mauran 50'; E by Thayer Street 50'; S by John Street 50'; W by heirs of Rufus Waterman. - Deed Book 60, page 74, in Providence City Hall.

1854 Property taxed to Peter Linard heirs...and to the following persons in the years designated:

1917 Granville M Borden
1925 William A. Berridge
1927 Rufus C Fuller
1961 Robert C Mason and wife Anne B

2. Date of erection: Between 1810 and 1817
3. Builder: Presumably built by Russell Potter who is identified on the deeds as a housewright.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
May 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Built between 1810 and 1817, this is a medium-sized frame house with interesting doorway and similar interior detail.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: two stories facing south, rectangular, 31' x 38' (five-bay front) plus small wing at northeast added later.
2. Foundations: Brick on south front; stone on east, stuccoed and scored to resemble ashlar masonry.
3. Wall construction: Frame, filled with brick according to owner, covered with clapboards, corner boards.
4. Stoops, etc.: Wood entrance stoop, railing with turned newels and rectangular balusters.
5. Chimneys: Two inside brick chimneys.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Six-panel main entrance door, flat panels; complex, small-scale moldings, side lights; frontispiece with reeded pilasters, deep projecting cornice on reeded brackets, high entablature with carved fans.

- b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double-hung windows, simple, molded frames, no shutters. Eight over eight light double-hung windows in attic.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable, shingled.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Molded wood cornice, returned slightly at gable ends, boxed eaves.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central hall, five-room plan, parlor at southwest, dining room at southeast, original large kitchen at rear center, modern kitchen in rear wing. Bedrooms on second floor in similar arrangement.
2. Stairways: L-shape with short leg and landing at the top, open string, open well, carved fan step end ornament, three rectangular balusters per step, molded handrail, turned newels.
3. Flooring: Wide, pine board floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted or papered.
5. Doors: Original six-panel doors on first floor and parts of upper floors, raised panels, small-scale moldings.
6. Trim: Molded chair rail in hall and principal rooms, simple, painted wainscoting. Molded cornices. Pilaster trim in parlor may be later.
7. Hardware: Simple iron latches with brass knobs.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Central hot air. One-story wood mantels in principal rooms with deeply projecting shelves, complex moldings, engaged colonettes or pilasters with brackets.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Faces south at northwest corner John and Thayer Streets, house on sidewalk line at south and east. Medium-size lot elevated slightly above the sidewalk line.
2. Enclosures: Modern wood fence.
3. Landscaping: Informal with terrace and lawn at north rear.